What is claimed is:

1   1. A method for facilitating supplier qualification
2   and quality management functions in a communications network
3   environment, comprising:
4   receiving at a host system a request by a user system
5   to execute supplier qualification and quality management
6   software, wherein said software comprises a selection
7   module, a qualification module and a quality module, and
8   wherein said host system and said user system are connected
9   to said communications network;
10   executing said software at the host system;
11   sending results of said execution of said software to
12   the user system;
13   receiving input at the host system from the user system
14   in response to said execution of said software; and
15   providing the user system with output generated as a
16   result of said execution of said software.

1   2. The method of claim 1 wherein said selection module
2   comprises:
3   supplier selection; and
4   supplier audit management.

1   3. The method of claim 2 wherein said supplier
2   selection comprises:
3   retrieving at least one potential supplier based on
4   specific technical requirements.

1   4. The method of claim 2 wherein said supplier audit

2   management comprises:

3   accessing audit data for a potential supplier;

4   analyzing said audit data; and

5   approving said potential supplier based on results of

6   said analysis of said audit data.

1   5. The method of claim 4, wherein said audit data

2   comprises:

3   audit schedules;

4   a list of completed audits; and

5   audit reports.

1   6. The method of claim 2 wherein said supplier

2   selection is performed using a development toolkit network

3   software application.

1   7. The method of claim 2 wherein said supplier audit

2   management is performed using a quality information network

3   software application.

1   8. The method of claim 1 wherein said qualification

2   module comprises:

3   technology qualification; and

4   part qualification.

1   9.   The method of claim 8 wherein said technology
2   qualification comprises:
3   accessing technology survey data for a potential
4   supplier;
5   analyzing said technology survey data; and
6   qualifying the technology of said potential supplier
7   based on results of said analysis of said technology survey
8   data.

1   10.   The method of claim 8 wherein said technology
2   qualification is performed using a development toolkit
3   network software application.

1   11.   The method of claim 8 wherein said part
2   qualification comprises:
3   accessing part qualification data for a potential
4   supplier;
5   analyzing said part qualification data; and
6   qualifying proposed part from said potential supplier
7   based on results of said analysis of said part qualification
8   data.

1   12.   The method of claim 8 wherein said part
2   qualification is performed using a part qualification
3   software application.

1   13.   The method of claim 1 wherein said quality module

2   comprises:

3   process change management;

4   supplier quality management; and

5   tracking problems in a log.

1   14.   The method of claim 13 wherein said process change

2   management comprises:

3   accessing supplier initiated proposed changes to a

4   qualified part;

5   analyzing said proposed changes; and

6   accepting said proposed changes based on results of

7   said analysis of said proposed changes.

1   15.   The method of claim 13 wherein said process change

2   management is performed using a process change notification

3   software application.

1   16.   The method of claim 13 wherein said supplier

2   quality management comprises:

3   accessing quality metrics provided by a supplier;

4   analyzing said quality metrics; and

5   notifying said supplier of quality issues based on

6   results of said analysis of said quality metrics.

1   17.   The method of claim 13 wherein said supplier

2   quality management is performed using a process change

3   notification software application.

1   18. The method of claim 13 wherein said tracking

2 problems in a log comprises:

3   opening a new problem report;

4   accessing said open problem report;

5   closing said open problem report;

6   notifying interested parties of status of said problem

7 report;

8   generating a report that summarizes said status of a

9 collection of said problem reports.

1   19. The method of claim 13 wherein said tracking

2 problems in a log is performed using a problem log software

3 application.

1   20. The method of claim 1 wherein said user system is

2 used by a supplier and access is restricted to said supplier

3 data.

1   21. The method of claim 1 wherein said user system is

2 used by a supplier and access is restricted to supplier

3 application functions.

1   22.   A system for facilitating supplier qualification
2 and quality management functions in a communications network
3 environment, comprising:
4   a host system including a web server, an applications
5 server, and a database server;
6   at least one data storage device in communication with
7 said host system;
8   supplier qualification and quality management software
9 application being executed by said host system;
10   a firewall in communication with said host system;
11   a workstation; and
12   a computer network connecting the host system to the
13 workstation; wherein information inputted into the
14 workstation is transferred to the host system and made
15 available to the supplier qualification and quality
16 management software application.

1   23.   A storage medium encoded with machine-readable
2 computer program code for facilitating supplier
3 qualification and quality management functions in a
4 communications network environment, the storage medium
5 including instructions for causing an enterprise system to
6 implement a method comprising:
7   receiving at a host system a request by a user system
8 to execute supplier qualification and quality management
9 software, wherein said software comprises a selection
10 module, a qualification module and a quality module, and
11 wherein said host system and said user system are connected
12 to said communications network;
13   executing said software at the host system;
14   sending results of said execution of said software to
15 the user system;
16   receiving input at the host system from the user system
17 in response to said execution of said software; and
18   providing the user system with output generated as a
19 result of said execution of said software.

1   24.   The storage medium of claim 23 wherein said
2 selection module comprises:
3   supplier selection; and
4   supplier audit management.

1   25.   The storage medium of claim 24 wherein said

2   supplier selection comprises:

3   retrieving at least one potential supplier based on

4   specific technical requirements.

1   26.   The storage medium claim 24 wherein said supplier

2   audit management comprises:

3   accessing audit data for a potential supplier;

4   analyzing said audit data; and

5   approving said potential supplier based on results of

6   said analysis of said audit data.

1   27.   The storage medium of claim 26, wherein said audit

2   data comprises:

3   audit schedules;

4   a list of completed audits; and

5   audit reports.

1   28.   The storage medium of claim 24 wherein said

2   supplier selection is performed using a development toolkit

3   network software application.

1   29.   The storage medium of claim 24 wherein said

2   supplier audit management is performed using a quality

3   information network software application.

1   30.   The storage medium of claim 23 wherein said
2 qualification module comprises:
3   technology qualification; and
4   part qualification.

1   31.   The storage medium of claim 30 wherein said
2 technology qualification comprises:
3   accessing technology survey data for a potential
4 supplier;
5   analyzing said technology survey data; and
6   qualifying the technology of said potential supplier
7 based on results of said analysis of said technology survey
8 data.

1   32.   The storage medium of claim 30 wherein said
2 technology qualification is performed using a development
3 toolkit network software application.

1   33.   The storage medium of claim 30 wherein said part
2 qualification comprises:
3   accessing part qualification data for a potential
4 supplier;
5   analyzing said part qualification data; and
6   qualifying proposed part from said potential supplier
7 based on results of said analysis of said part qualification
8 data.

1   34. The storage medium of claim 30 wherein said part

2 qualification is performed using a part qualification

3 software application.

1   35. The storage medium of claim 23 wherein said

2 quality module comprises:

3   process change management;

4   supplier quality management; and

5   tracking problems in a log.

1   36. The storage medium of claim 35 wherein said

2 process change management comprises:

3   accessing supplier initiated proposed changes to a

4 qualified part;

5   analyzing said proposed changes; and

6   accepting said proposed changes based on results of

7 said analysis of said proposed changes.

1   37. The storage medium of claim 35 wherein said

2 process change management is performed using a process

3 change notification software application.

1   38. The storage medium of claim 35 wherein said

2 supplier quality management comprises:

3   accessing quality metrics provided by a supplier;

4   analyzing said quality metrics; and

5   notifying said supplier of quality issues based on

6 results of said analysis of said quality metrics.

1   39.   The storage medium of claim 35 wherein said

2   supplier quality management is performed using a process

3   change notification software application.

1   40.   The storage medium of claim 35 wherein said

2   tracking problems in a log comprises:

3   opening a new problem report;

4   accessing said open problem report;

5   closing said open problem report;

6   notifying interested parties of status of said problem

7   report;

8   generating a report that summarizes said status of a

9   collection of said problem reports.

1   41.   The storage medium of claim 35 wherein said

2   tracking problems in a log is performed using a problem log

3   software application.

1   42.   The storage medium of claim 23 wherein said user

2   system is used by a supplier and access is restricted to

3   said supplier data.

1   43.   The storage medium of claim 23 wherein said user

2   system is used by a supplier and access is restricted to

3   supplier application functions.